

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 DPW-01 ORM-03 SR-02 ACDA-19

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

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P R 201146Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6594

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

COMUSSAG

CINCPAC

SECDEF

CJCS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 8403

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS MILI CB

SUBJECT: FANK VICTORY NORTH OF PHNOM PENH

1. AT A TIME WHEN SENIOR STATE AND DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS ARE TESTIFYING BEFORE CONGRESS IN SUPPORT OF OUR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID PROGRAMS FOR CAMBODIA, THE NEWS OF VICTORY BY THE ARMED FORCES OF THE KHMER REPUBLIC OVER THE ENEMY NORTH OF PHNOM PENH (IN THE LOVEK-ROUTE 5 AREA) SHOULD BE PARTICULARLY WELCOME. IT IS A TIMELY REMINDER THAT FANK CAN TAKE THE OFFENSIVE AND WIN BATTLES, AND THAT THE ENEMY IS NOT ABLE TO IMPOSE HIS WILL MILITARILY WHEREVER AND WHENEVER HE SO DESIRES.

2. THIS HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN TRUE. IN THE MIDDLE OF MARCH OF THIS YEAR FANK SUFFERED A SERIOUS DEFEAT WHEN IT HAD TO

EVACUATE THE FORMER RELIGIOUS CAPITAL OF OUDONG. THIS WITHDRAWAL WAS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER SETBACK AT KOMPONG LUONG WHERE FANK WITHDREW UNDER ENEMY PRESSURE,

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LEAVING BEHIND CONSIDERABLE MILITARY EQUIPMENT. FOR

ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES THE TONLE SAP RIVER CONNECTING PHNOM PENH WITH THE RICH LAKE REGION NORTHWEST OF THE CAPITAL WAS CLOSED TO COMMERCIAL SHIPPING. FACED WITH THESE MILITARY SETBACKS NORTH OF PHNOM PENH AND A PESSIMISTIC PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE IN THE CAPITAL, SOME MILITARY SUCCESS WAS PARTICULARLY NEEDED THAT WOULD ENERGIZE FANK AND RESTORE SELF-CONFIDENCE TO THE KHMERERFY AFTER MUCH CAJOLING AND TALKING, I AM HAPPY TO REPORT TODAY THAT THE GKR HAS ATTAINED AN IMPORTANT OFFENSIVE VICTORY IN THE LOVEK-ROUTE 5 AREA NORTH OF PHNOM PENH.

3. KOMPONG LUONG, WHICH FELL TO THE ENEMY IN EARLY APRIL, HAS BEEN RECAPTURED BY FANK. REINFORCED BY FRESH TROOPS, FANK PUSHED NORTH OF PHNOM PENH ON HIGHWAY 5 TO REACH KOMPONG LUONG ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 19. A COUPLE OF DAYS EARLIER, THE BESIEGED GARRISON AT LOVEK HAD BROKEN OUT EASTWARD AND HAD REACHED THE TONLE SAP RIVER. THE LATTER DEVELOPMENT IS GIVING THE KHMER NAVY THE OPPORTUNITY TO EVACUATE THE LARGE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF AT LEAST 15,000 PEOPLE FROM THIS ENCLAVE TO AREAS HELD BY THE GOVERNMENT. THIS SUCCESS TAKES ON ADDITIONAL IMPORTANCE IF WE REMEMBER THAT HERETOFORE FANK HAS UNDERTAKEN FEW SUCCESSFUL OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS. THE 37-DAY THRUST UP ROUTE 5 COVERED ONLY 15 KILOMETERS IN DISTANCE BUT DESTROYED THE EQUIVALENT OF AT LEAST THREE ENEMY BATTALIONS. THE COST TO FANK IN MEN AND EQUIPMENT SO FAR HAS BEEN RELATIVELY LIGHT. BUT MOST IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT FANK HAS REGAINED TERRAIN AND CONTROL OF A WATERWAY IMPORTANT TO THE ECONOMIC SURVIVAL OF GKR TERRITORY. IF THE TONLE SAP RIVER CAN BE KEPT OPEN TO COMMERCIAL NAVIGATION, IT WILL GIVE PHNOM PENH EASIER ACCESS TO THE AGRICULTURAL LANDS OF PURSAT AND BATTAMBANG PROVINCES, WHICH WOULD HAVE A FAVORABLE IMPACT ON ALLEVIATING THE FOOD SHORTAGE AND HIGH PRICES IN THE CAPITAL.

4. THE KHMER NAVY AND AIR FORCE MADE GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS

TO THIS EFFORT BY CLEARING THE TONLE SAP OF THE IMPROVISED BARRIERS THAT THE KC HAD PLACED ACROSS THE RIVER AND BY EVACUATING THE REFUGEES FROM LOVEK TO KOMPONG CHHNANG.  
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AS OF TODAY, SOME 8,000 REFUGEES HAVE BEEN MOVED, COMPLETE WITH PROVISIONS WHICH INCLUDE CATTLE, AND OX CARTS, TO KOMPONG CHHNANG WHERE ASSISTED BY VOLUNTEER AGENCIES, THEY WILL RECEIVE CARE AND BE RESETTLED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE ENTIRE OPERATION RELIED HEAVILY ON EFFECTIVE AIR COVER WHICH WAS FORTHCOMING IN UNPRECEDENTED NUMBERS BY THE KHMER AIR FORCE.

5. ONE VICTORY WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY ALTER THE MILITARY SITUATION IN THIS COUNTRY, OF COURSE. IF PROPERLY EXPLOITED HOWEVER, THE RECENT EVENTS ON ROUTE 5 COULD GIVE THE KHMER THAT ADDED BOOST IN SELF-CONFIDENCE AND MORALE NEEDED TO CARRY THEM FORWARD IN THE STRUGGLE. THEY SHOULD ALSO FACILITATE OBTAINING SUPPORT FOR THE KHMER CAUSE OUTSIDE THIS COUNTRY. I HAVE ALREADY TALKED TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE NEED FOR THE GKR TO GIVE THIS MILITARY ACHIEVEMENT PROPER COVERAGE SO THAT IT WILL HAVE THE DESIRED IMPACT BOTH IN COUNTRY AND ABROAD.  
DEAN

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## Message Attributes

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